DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 414 513 CG 027 040

AUTHOR Cahill, Mildred; Martland, Sandra
TITLE Extending the Reach: Distance Delivery in Career Counseling: ERIC Digest.
INSTITUTION ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Student Services, Greensboro, NC.; Canadian Guidance and Counselling Foundation, Ottawa (Ontario).
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO EDO-CG-95-73
PUB DATE 1995-00-00
NOTE 4p.
CONTRACT RR93002004
PUB TYPE ERIC Publications (071) -- ERIC Digests in Full Text (073)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Career Awareness; *Career Counseling; *Career Development; Career Guidance; Careers; Counseling Techniques; *Distance Education; Foreign Countries; Geographic Isolation; Individual Development; *Rural Areas; Rural Population; Social Development; Technological Advancement; Vocational Interests
IDENTIFIERS Canada; ERIC Digests; *Life Planning; *Remote Access

ABSTRACT

Generations of rural people have relied on resource industries for their livelihoods. This digest examines how modern technologies allow career counselors to serve this population. In distance career counseling, four factors must be considered: (1) community characteristics, such as the informal hiring practices seen in many rural communities; (2) nature of the labor market, where some rural communities have a restricted range of occupational opportunities; (3) rural communities in transition, where many rural labor markets are changing; and (4) rural culture, in which many rural careers involve a wide range of non-market activities. Distance career counselors can use a variety of communication technologies to deliver programs, such as audio-teleconferencing, which is available in any place with regular phone service. Video-cassette players may also be used and can help parents work with their children in exploring career options. Print materials, such as workbooks, can explain career development issues and strategies and can provide clients with a record of their experiences. In any such program, several factors can enhance success. Community-based partners must be involved, flexible programs must be available for divergent rural communities, program delivery must be firmly in place, and program administration can be simplified with local on-site coordinators. (RJM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 414 513

Extending the Reach: Distance Delivery in Career Counseling: ERIC Digest.

EDO-CG-95-73

by Mildred Cahill and Sandra Martland

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

CG027040

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE ON Counseling And Student Services

ERIC DIGEST

1995

EDO-CG-95-73

Extending the Reach: Distance Delivery in Career Counseling

Mildred Cahill & Sandra Martland

Overview

Generations of rural people have relied on resource industries for their livelihoods. In many areas, these career opportunities have been eroded by changing trade policies, technology, and the depletion of renewable resources. Career education and counseling are more important in modern rural societies than ever before, but providing services to a dispersed population by conventional means is costly and, in many cases, impractical. Modern technologies now allow career counselors to deliver their services from afar.

Discussion

Distance Career Counseling

Distance education grew out of efforts to provide academic courses in schools that could not afford conventional methods of teaching. However, Pelton (1991) emphasized the need for sensitivity to geographic and cultural differences to avoid using communication technologies for "mindless megatraining" (p. 5). In distance career counseling, four factors must be considered.

1. *Community Characteristics:* Most career counseling theory is rooted in an urban-industrial environment and value system. For example, job-search skills include some forceful techniques that make sense in a competitive labor market where employers do not know one applicant from another. However, the more informal hiring practices in many rural communities make it improper to use tactics such as follow-up telephone calls for making oneself more visible. Additionally, there are differences between rural communities in terms of location, history, transportation links, and economic base. Some communities embrace a set of values and practices that approximate those of urban society; others have very different customs. Where communities lie on the rural-urban continuum has a major influence on the career education needs of residents.

2. *Nature of the Labor Market:* Conventional career development theory assumes a diverse, specialized labor market. Most rural communities have a narrower range of occupational opportunities and are more generalist, with people engaging in multiple activities in both formal and informal labor markets. Because rural communities are not smaller versions of urban society, career paths and career values are significantly different. In fact, rural Canadians likely have more in common with rural people in other nations than they have with urban Canadians (Whitaker, 1988).

3. *Rural Communities in Transition:* Rural labor markets are changing. Non-traditional businesses and occupations are emerging, but the process of economic diversification is uneven. Some communities are quick to seize opportunities while others avoid the risk and uncertainty of change. Communities have a significant influence on people's occupational goals and expectations, propensity for risk-taking, approaches to problem-solving, and self-concept, all of which are important to career development.

4. *Rural Culture:* Environment shapes language. People develop a sense of the meaning of words from personal experience. Shared language is fundamental to any teaching. Experiences with career education programs show that it is important to understand the implications of even a simple word such as"work." When most people think about going to work, they envisage working for an employer in exchange for money and fringe benefits. In non-industrialized areas, work entails not only wage-earning labor but any activity that contributes to the standard of living of the household (Hill, 1983). Rural careers involve a wide range of non-market activities. Distance career counselors must develop sensitivity to the differences between their own culturally-derived assumptions and those of their clients, and use language that the client finds meaningful.

Developing Distance Career Programs

Distance career counselors use a variety of communication technologies to deliver programs. Each technology has strengths and weaknesses and the choice depends on the task, the availability of equipment, and the cost. An effective means of distance counseling is audio-teleconferencing: it is accessible, affordable, and a comfortable medium for discussion. The authors' programs generally incorporate 8-12 teleconferences of 90-120 minutes each (Cahill, 1994; Cahill & Martland, 1994; Garlie, Lilly, & Mulcahy, 1994). Most clients use temporary sites fitted with portable equipment which has been shipped to host communities before the program begins. Any facility that

has regular telephone service is viable: hospitals, schools, and community organization offices. Each site has a microphone and speaker box which are linked to other sites, allowing participants to speak and listen to each other. The system ensures confidentiality, which is important to promoting free and open discussion of personal matters. It also allows counselors to use guest speakers. Young, rural women have been introduced to nontraditional occupations via rolemodels in teleconference sessions; others have been provided information on rural-development initiatives through their interaction with a panel of community and government representatives. Guests participate from their homes or offices, making it convenient to engage competent resource people.

The widespread use of video-cassette players allows counselors to demonstrate skills and to stimulate discussion of sensitive issues using video. Video cassettes have been produced to give parents ideas for helping their children explore career options, to encourage young women and teenaged mothers, to help career drifters examine their lives and their feelings, and to teach peer and lay counselors to aid others.

Print materials are also integrated into programs. Workbooks explain career development issues and strategies and provide clients with a record of their experiences. Supplementary materials give information on the local labor market. Counselor handbooks offer detailed suggestions for delivering the programs. By adding their own supplementary materials, counselors can adapt the programs to any locality.

In developing and delivering distance career counseling programs, several factors will enhance success:

1. *Partnerships:* Community-based partners, whose mandate and/or activities agree with the program, must be actively involved throughout. Possible partners include schools, community colleges, co-operatives, development associations, business organizations, farm associations, unions, rural women's associations, youth groups, and native organizations.

2. *Program Content:* Variations among rural communities demand that programs remain flexible and adaptable. Within a general framework, local considerations may require career counselors to add, drop, or modify program content.

3. *Program Delivery:* Many community associations are willing to volunteer their facilities. In one program, participants used fax machines to introduce themselves and handle information requests during the program. A local coordinator received bulky materials and distributed them to participants as needed.

4. *Program Administration:* Many administrative tasks can be simplified with local on-site coordinators. Local knowledge can help avoid problems.

Conclusion

Society's ability to communicate rapidly and cheaply over long distances is changing the way institutions function. Career counselors can develop programs that meet the needs both of rural residents wanting to pursue careers in larger urban centers and of those wanting to create their niche in a changing rural society. To be successful, career counselors must provide partners with a realistic assessment of the effort required, give adequate support throughout the process, and establish regular communications to monitor progress, address problems, and develop mutual feelings of trust and inclusion.

The experience of the Centre for the Development of Distance Career Counselling demonstrates the effectiveness of using communications technologies to help people in remote communities explore alternatives and manage their careers. Counselors have only begun to tap the potential unleashed by new media. As distance career counselors develop their mediaskills, they will discover new ways to improve the quality of career services to remote communities.

References

Cahill, M. (1994). *Shaping the future: Towards the occupational integration of women.* Toronto, ON: Lugus.

Cahill, M., & Martland, S. (1994). *Steady as we go: A counselling program for career drifters.* Toronto, ON: Lugus.

Garlie, N., Lilly, D., & Mulcahy, B. (1994). *Options and opportunities: Distance career counselling in rural contexts.* Ottawa: ISM, Careerware.

Hill, R. (1983). *The meaning of work and the reality of unemployment in the Newfoundland context.* St. John's, NF: Community Services Council.

Pelton, J. (1991). Technology and education: Friend or foe? *Research in Distance Education*, 3, 2-9.

Whitaker, I. (1988). Core values among Newfoundland fishermen in the 1960s. Anthropologica, 30, 75-86.

Mildred Cahill is an associate professor, Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Sandra Martland is a research assistant with the Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

ERIC Digests are in the public domain and may be freely reproduced and disseminated. This publication was funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Contract No. RR93002004. Opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the positions of the U.S. Department of Education, OERI, or ERIC/CASS.

For information on other ERIC/CASS products and services, please call toll-free (800) 414-9769 or (910) 334-4114 or fax (910) 334-4116 or write ERIC/CASS, School of Education, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC 27412.